

FOOD EDITOR: Janet Rausa Fuller, foodnews@suntimes.com

To send letters or news:
Food, Chicago Sun-Times, 350 N. Orleans St., Chicago 60654
Phone: (312) 321-2586 | Food News: (312) 321-3139
Fax: (312) 321-2566 | Advertising: (312) 321-2470

BITS & BITES

Putting his stock in soup

Former waiter is on a mission to elevate food many don't appreciate

"This guy makes the most incredible soup and I can't remember his last name."
Dion Antic, co-owner of Bagel on Damen, 1252 N. Damen

BY MICHAEL NAGRANT

Delano Crawford's soups are that good. After a slurp or two of his Supa Zuppa gourmet brews, a guy might forget a lot: the wretched, condensed, canned glop he's eaten forever, his worries and even a skilled soupmaker's last name.

When I ask Antic who's responsible for blowing my mind with a vegan, curried, butternut squash and Granny Smith apple soup at his new bagel shop (I generally feel the same repulsion for vegan dishes that vegans reserve for leather shoes), Antic says, "This guy [Crawford] sneaks in the back during construction. Lots of people come in with promises, so you think, oh great. But we taste his short rib beef barley, and we're like, 'We'll take everything.'"

A week later, after spending a couple of hours watching Crawford cook, I find Antic's oversight even more amusing.

Crawford, a former swing trader who says he once made \$100,000 in one hour of options trading (he got wiped out in 2000), is one of the most unforgettable people I've met.

Though gray hair retreats across his head, Crawford at 52 is lean like a yoga master and tan like a spring breaker, with the energy of a 27-year-old.

He's made a habit of breaking in through the back door: In 1983, after graduating from Florida State with a bachelor's in finance, he moved to Chicago. Having worked in restaurants since he was 13, he figured he'd wait tables until he got a finance gig.

"I always believed you find the best place in town and you go ask for a job," Crawford says.



Soupmaker Delano Crawford says soup is a "neglected part of cuisine." | TOM CRUZE~SUN-TIMES

So he ambled over to the now-defunct Le Perroquet and asked chef Jovan Trbojevic for a job. Trbojevic told him to return in a few weeks. He did; Trbojevic asked for his phone number. Crawford didn't have a phone, so he gave the number for Fontano's, a sub shop near his apartment in Little Italy. Trbojevic called that afternoon and offered him a job.

Crawford worked his way up to head captain at Trbojevic's private dining club Les Nomades, where he says he served filmmaker Oliver Stone and remembers writers Allan Bloom and Saul Bellow regularly

jousting over politics.

One night, Julia Child was mopping up the juices of a deconstructed Nicoise salad with bread. Crawford says Trbojevic tapped him on the shoulder and said, "The only thing that makes me happier as a chef is to see a distinguished fat man with juices dribbling down his chin."

Trbojevic's lobster bisque was the spiritual inspiration for Crawford's soup business; a chorizo-stuffed corn dumpling Crawford uses in his deconstructed tamale soup is a nod to a cheese quenelle garnish on that bisque.

WHERE TO SLURP SUPA ZUPPA SOUPS

Bagel on Damen

1252 N. Damen

Demitasse

1066 W. Taylor

Saugatuck Coffee Company

3344 N. Halsted

SWAP SHOP

BY SANDY THORN CLARK

Tomato dishes with a twist

Rustic Italian Tomato Soup — perfect with crusty bread — from June Hamilton of Chicago, and South of the Border Tomato Bean Soup from Red Gold, makers of tomato products, are Swap Shop solutions for B.T. of Chicago, who is seeking unusual homemade tomato soup recipes.

Also this week, Donna Frazier of Park Ridge shares her favorite recipe for Johnny Marzetti (requested by F.C. of Orland Park). And Amy Bellisario of Lemont sends her no-fuss recipe for Crunchy Bacon Coleslaw with peanuts (requested by D.H. of Chicago).

For 6 servings of South of the Border Tomato Bean Soup:

In large saucepan, combine 1 (15-ounce) can spicy hot chili beans, 2 (6-ounce) cans vegetable juice, 1 (14.5-ounce) can petite diced tomatoes with green chilies, 1 (10-ounce) package frozen corn and ½ cup sliced scallions; mix well. Bring to boil. Reduce heat; simmer 10 minutes. Ladle soup into individual serving bowls; top each with dollop of sour cream.

For 10 servings of Crunchy Bacon Coleslaw:

In a large bowl, combine ¾ cup

mayonnaise, 1 tablespoon sugar and 1½ teaspoons cider vinegar. Add 4 cups shredded green cabbage, 1 cup shredded red cabbage (or 8 ounces coleslaw blend), 3 ounces packaged real bacon bits and, if desired, chopped onion to taste. Mix lightly; cover and refrigerate.

Just before serving, stir in ½ cup chopped peanuts.

Requests

Please print a recipe for curried cauliflower.

C.V., Aurora

I'm looking for a recipe for bread pudding with bourbon.

A.B., Chicago

Does someone have a recipe for sponge cake made with hot milk?

L.H., Chicago

Send recipes and requests to: Swap Shop, Chicago Sun-Times, 350 N. Orleans, 9th Floor, Chicago 60654 or by e-mail, swapshop@suntimes.com.

All mail must include a daytime telephone number. Sorry, requests can't be answered personally.



RUSTIC ITALIAN TOMATO SOUP

MAKES 4 (1-CUP) SERVINGS

- 2 cups mixed bell pepper strips (14½-ounce) can diced tomatoes, undrained**
1 (14- or 14½-ounce) can chicken broth
½ (15½-ounce) can navy beans, rinsed and drained
3 tablespoons fresh basil leaves, chopped
2 tablespoons fresh parsley, snipped
1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar
½ teaspoon dried oregano, crumbled
1 medium garlic clove, minced
⅞ to ¼ teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes
1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil

¼ teaspoon salt

In food processor or blender, process bell peppers, undrained tomatoes, broth, beans, basil, parsley, vinegar, oregano, garlic and red pepper flakes until slightly chunky or smooth (depending on your preference).

Pour into large saucepan. Bring to boil over high heat. Reduce heat and simmer, covered, for 20 minutes or until flavors are blended. Remove from heat. Stir in oil and salt. Ladle into soup bowls.

June Hamilton

Nutrition facts per serving: 215 calories, 5 g fat, 1 g saturated fat, 0 mg cholesterol, 32 g carbohydrates, 12 g protein, 1,288 mg sodium, 8 g fiber

onion and green peppers; saute until vegetables are tender and onion is translucent (about 10 minutes). Remove vegetables from pan.

Cook beef and sausage in pan until browned, stirring and breaking up with back of spoon. Pour off fat.

Return vegetables to pan. Pour soup, tomato paste, tomato sauce and water over meat mixture. Add salt and pepper. Simmer uncov-

ered for 30 minutes. Add mushrooms and macaroni; mix well.

Spoon mixture into 9-by-13-inch casserole dish. Cover with cheese. Bake for 20 minutes.

Donna Frazier

Nutrition facts per serving: 594 calories, 43 g fat, 17 g saturated fat, 113 mg cholesterol, 24 g carbohydrates, 29 g protein, 1,804 mg sodium, 4 g fiber

food411

BY DENISE I. O'NEAL

Common cause

Common Threads hosts its fifth annual World Festival — and celebrates founder Art Smith's 50th birthday — from 6 to 9 p.m. March 1 at Soldier Field, 1410 Museum Campus; \$250. More than 70 chefs will cook at the bash, including Rick Bayless, Ming Tsai, Michelle Bernstein, Jimmy Bannos Sr. and Jr., Gale Gand and Stephanie Izard. Info: commonthreads.org.

Haitian relief

Kendall College, 900 N. North Branch, is donating proceeds from its Spice Up Your Life Cooking class, taking place at 6 p.m. Feb. 24, to the Clinton-Bush Haiti Fund. Haitian-inspired dishes include fried pork, red beans and rice and sweet potato pudding; \$20. (312) 263-0456.

Presidential palates

The dining habits of our nation's presidents and first fami-



Art Smith

lies, from George Washington to Barack Obama, is the topic of a Chicago Foodways Roundtable program presented by culinary historian Barbara Kuck at 10 a.m. Feb. 27 at Kendall College, 900 N. North Branch; \$3. (847) 432-8255.

Catch of the day

The Irish-American Heritage Center, 4626 N. Knox, kicks off its Friday Night Lenten Fish Fry at 6:30 p.m. Friday; \$12 adults, \$8 kids. (773) 282-7035.

outtathebox

BY DENISE I. O'NEAL

TANDOOR CHEF ROASTED EGGPLANT NAAN PIZZA

★★★★

Suggested retail: \$2.99 for 8.9-ounce pizza

Per ½ pizza: 278 calories, 12 g fat, 490 mg sodium, 33 g carbohydrates

Eggplant pizza — the combination might sound odd, but the flavors are perfectly in sync.

Leavened bread is the base of this clay oven-baked, Indian-style vegetarian pizza.

The breaded, roasted eggplant is tender and sweet, the perfect complement to the flavors of basil, garlic, onions and tomato.

Cooking time is 10 to 12 minutes at 450 degrees on the center oven rack. The directions suggest placing the pizza directly on the oven rack.

For a softer crust, you can use a cookie sheet; just add a few minutes to the heating time.

Tandoor Chef Naan Pizzas also are available in margherita, cilantro pesto and spinach, and paneer cheese varieties.

They are available in the frozen food section of Whole Foods. doneal@suntimes.com

